

The Ukrainian Holodomor as Genocide

In the autumn of 2018, the 85th anniversary of the Holodomor will be celebrated.¹ The moral duty of Ukrainian citizens should be to appeal to the United Nations to recognize at the international level – just as the Supreme Council of Ukraine on November 28, 2006 did – that the Great Famine should be understood to be a genocidal act against the Ukrainian people.

Ten years prior, the first appeal to the UN in connection with the 75th anniversary of the Holodomor proved unsuccessful for two reasons: resistance of the Russian Federation to the notion of it being genocidal, and the inability of those seeking the objective to convince UN members of the mechanisms used and number of victims that occurred as a result. In 2018, Russia's resistance will be weakened because of the catastrophic decline of its international authority. Consequently, chances will increase that the UN General Assembly will recognize the Holodomor as genocide. The final task, it seems, is to reject erroneous arguments and replace them with the facts of the atrocity.

The arguments that the Holodomor meets the criteria specified in the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide passed on December 9, 1948 should be formulated with regard to three aspects: the goal of the terrorist operation resulting in the Great Famine, the mechanism of terror, and the number of victims.

The Objective of Terror through Famine

The Leninist-Stalinist nationality policy was based on the politicization of ethnicity, namely:

- on granting the status of “titular nations” to each majority ethnic groups inhabiting particular areas, and granting the most numerous nations the constitutional features of pseudo-statehood;

¹ This paper was submitted to editors in 2017 (Editors' footnote).

- on the authorities being firmly “rooted” in national oblasts and raions, i.e. employment of the local cadres in the administrative apparatus, use of the language of the “titular” nations in education and mass media, support for the development of culture: “national in form but communist in content”;
- on the official registration of citizens’ nationality (in IDs and questionnaires).

The politicization of ethnicity created the pretense of having solved the nationality question, but in reality, it reduced the status of all nations in particular doing so in a fashion that directly focused on the ethnicity of a nation’s makeup except the “state-building” one, the USSR. Whoever resisted was subject to repression. The epicenter of Soviet reprisal became Ukraine largely because it displayed the strongest resistance: first to being incorporated by the newest form of Russian empire, communism, and then to Soviet socio-economic efforts to transform Ukrainian society. When appearing in New York during the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Holodomor, the author of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Rafał Lemkin, emphasized that the Bolshevik leaders absorbed, as it were, the Ukrainian people, forcing the Ukrainians into the multi-ethnic Soviet nation. Not only moral but also physical destruction was carried out through extermination of the intelligentsia – the brains of the nation, the clergy – the soul of the nation, and also the peasantry economically independent of the state – the carriers of national spirit. It is in this degradation of the national status of the Ukrainian people to the status of a primitive ethnic group, and in the extermination – in contemporary parlance – of civil society that R. Lemkin saw the symptoms of genocide.²

Lemkin’s term “Soviet nation” evolved already after his death into the concept of “Soviet nation as a new historical community”. Communist party ideologues tried to endow the whole of the nations within the Soviet Union with the marks of a supnation: a community, as was stressed, of a higher order than the previous formations (family, tribe, union of tribes, people, and nation). However, the enslaved countries refused to remain ethnonations with symbolic rights and that along with the external pressures brought about by the Cold War, led to collapse of the Soviet Union.

Many of those in Ukraine and in the diaspora who voiced their opinions on the Great Famine entirely ignored Lemkin’s explicit warning at the meeting when he surmised that the genocidal nature of the Ukrainian famine of 1932–1933 was of a different type than that of the Jewish Holocaust. The Kremlin authorities used di-

² R. Lemkin, *Radians’kyi henotsyd v Ukraïni*, Kyiv 2009, p. 42.

verse means, including terror, to force the Ukrainian nation into the unified and “numbered” Soviet population, but their goal was not to completely exterminate the citizens of Ukrainian nationality, i.e. to carry out ethnic cleansing. The objective of state terror implemented through famine is always one: to gain control over the whole by destroying a part of it. In contrast, the objective of the Nazis was to physically exterminate the Jews as a certain community – national, ethnic, and religious.

Meanwhile, the term “Ukrainian Holocaust” in the sense of the Great Famine gained popularity in Ukraine owing to the vividness of this expression and the recognition by association of the words “Holocaust” and genocide as synonymous. The term strengthened the belief that the Kremlin strove to continually exterminate the Ukrainians as an ethnic community. The spread of this idea among the Ukrainian diaspora was facilitated by the fact that its members considered themselves citizens of their countries of residence, and what they shared with Ukraine was only a feeling of ethnic affinity. A vast portion of Ukraine’s citizens also had a heightened ethnic consciousness resulting from the lack of civil society (in the social system of coordinates) and its equivalent – a political nation (in the nationality system of coordinates) during the Soviet period. Some Ukrainian patriotically disposed citizens still feel indignant over the disappearance of the space for “nationality” from Ukrainian IDs. When, however, the Great Famine was presented as the “Ukrainian Holocaust” to the international community, the effect was the opposite because the Ukrainians in the Soviet Union were not persecuted like the Jews in the Third Reich: wherever Jews were found there, they were subject to repression, enslavement, and ultimately, were murdered.

Though terrible and terrific in nature, the Great Famine of the Ukrainian people was caused by certain circumstances connected with place and time. It is impossible to name all cause-and-effect relations that culminated with a *sokrushitelnyi udar* (“devastating blow” – Stalin’s words) directed at the rural population of Ukraine and Kuban. However, it will be necessary to do so to distinguish the main links in the chain of events that led to this genocidal moment. I will focus on the first: the cause that triggered the nationwide famine in 1932–1933.

What kind of communosocialism did Lenin and Stalin try to build? Marx, as is known, divided communism into two phases: socialism (the distribution of material goods according to work done) and full communism (distribution according to a person’s needs). The Soviet people, from the second generation, did not know that their leaders held the idea that the two stages differed from each other, as Marx believed, only in distribution. In terms of production of material goods, the built socialism did not differ from full communism, i.e. it would be a society deprived of

the private ownership of means of production, monetary and commodity relations, and the market. Commodities would be processed into products, and remuneration would not be calculated in rubles but in workdays (work units). It turned out, however, that it was possible to experiment with workers, but this failed in the case of farmers (the peasantry). When the state began to requisition produce from the peasants, they either stopped working or (under Stalin) they pretended to work, and the country faced a growing economic collapse. Lenin prevented the downfall by shifting from the highly flexible "prodrazviorstka" [distribution of food procurements], which lasted two years, to a fixed food tax in March 1921. He recognized the produce turned out by the peasantry as their property and confined the state to a predetermined percentage, similar to a kind of tax. Stalin, however, changed this over to a food tax as late as January 1933, after three years of "prodrazviorstka", which ruined the economy and caused famine all over the country. In his speeches after the fact, he inconspicuously shifted the elimination of monetary-commodity relationships and the market on to the second phase of communism, and in the postwar volumes of his "works" he introduced corrections to conceal the Marxist ideas of the Bolsheviks about comunosocialism.

The next link in the chain of events that needs to be rectified is understanding and correcting the chronology of the Great Famine. If this tragedy is dated for two years, it is only because its mechanism was first tried in November and December 1932 in some villages blacklisted for delaying the delivery of grain procurement quotas. In 1932, famine was rampant in Ukraine, having been caused, like in other regions of the USSR, by the imposition of grain quotas. In order to avoid discontinuance of sowing, the government provided food aid to the starving Ukrainian peasantry as well as fodder and seeds. To do so, Stalin abandoned exporting cereal crops and even purchased a limited shipment of grain from abroad. These facts are now known, and when the term genocide is used, our foreign colleagues only smile. On the other hand, the nationwide famine in 1932–1933 was felt far more acutely in Ukraine than in other regions. In 1930–1931, such plans for mandatory grain procurements were set for Ukraine as they had never carried out before. One might guess, although this cannot be documented, that it was the response of the Secretary General (i.e. Stalin) to the leading role of the Ukrainian peasantry in protests against collectivization and dekulakization in the spring of 1930. Whatever the reason, Stalin was compelled to stop collectivization for half a year and in its place implemented covertly a cooperative-based alternative rather than a more traditionally communist one.

The overestimated plans for mandatory grain procurements can also be regarded as terror through famine because the peasants were left without grain, starving,

and even died of hunger. According to the calculations of a group of demographers, headed by Professor Oleh Wolowyna (USA), from the M. Ptoukha Institute of Demography and Social Studies, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, the famine-induced supermortality in 1932 in Ukraine's rural areas exceeded 200,000.³ But it is not that terror that caused the Great Famine.

The danger of economic collapse in the third year of "prodrazviorstka" became obvious to the Communist Party's ruling bodies despite the victorious fanfare in press accounts of the opening of the newly built constructions and facilities as part of the first five-year plan. Some of the senior executives, particularly the group of Alexandr Smirnov, dared to openly challenge the general line of the VKP(b) Central Committee claims of success. We imagine Stalin as an almighty dictator, but he only ascended to that position after the Great Terror of 1937–1938 and the events of World War II. But in the early 1930s, he could have lost the post of General Secretary, if a new wave of protests had erupted in the country. The Chekists had already signaled that his potential removal was brewing: documents on the subject have been published that corroborate this idea.

On November 27, 1932, Stalin called a joint meeting of the Central Committee's Politburo and the Presidium of the VKP (b) Central Controlling Commission, at which he raised the matter of condemning A. Smirnov's group. Speaking before the supreme assembly, the Secretary General warned that the state would soon deal "a devastating blow" to "some" kolkhozniks (collective farm members) and individual farmers. He meant peasants who did not want to work for the state without material remuneration. Though the threat was made, the nature of it was not revealed.

Stalin already understood that it would be necessary to introduce the food tax. He was convinced that it would stop sabotage on the part of the peasantry, which had caused famine all over the country despite crop-favorable weather conditions in 1930–1932. In 1921, the replacement of "prodrazviorstka" by the food tax proved effective. However, Stalin delayed the change until January 1933. And it was only in January, under the pretext of the well-known winter procurement of grain, that he delivered the announced "devastating blow" to the peasantry in Ukraine, Kuban and on the Lower Volga. The goal of the blow, whose mechanism will be presented below, was by no means to stop sabotage, which ceased by itself owing to making the peasantry interested in their crops, which, after the authorities abandoned the "prodrazviorstka", began to belong only to them, except for the predetermined portion

³ N. Levchuk, T. Boriak, O. Wolowyna, O. Rudnytsky, A. Kovbasiuk, *Vtraty mis'koho i sil's'koho naselennia Ukraïny vnaslidok Holodomoru v 1932–1934 rr.: novi otsinky*, "Ukraïns'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal" 2015, no. 4, p. 100.

deemed to be for tax purposes/repayment. The “devastating blow” was intended to prevent the growing eruption of peasant protests. Millions of peasants had to die in torment so that Stalin could retain the supreme post of Secretary General of the VKP(b) Central Committee.

Mechanism of Terror

In the second half of 1921, in Ukraine's southern provinces affected by disastrous drought, the food tax was exacted using the methods of the abolished “*prodrazviorstka*”. Grain procurement employees knew that requisition of the meager crops condemned peasants to starvation but they nevertheless continued to do their job. The south was engulfed by anti-Soviet uprisings, and, as it turned out, crop requisitioning suppressed them more effectively than military operations. It was then that Stalin understood that the severely starving peasants were incapable of resistance.

The “devastating blow” involved four successive operations: 1) requisition of all storable food that the peasants had; 2) blocking of the robbed peasants in their homes; 3) blockade of information about the famine triggered by requisitions; 4) spreading the word to all and sundry that peasants who suffered from “food difficulties [food shortages]” were provided with state aid if they were able to produce new crops in collective and state farms (*kolkhozes* and *sovkhozes*). An interval of four or five weeks was maintained between food requisitioning and the provision of food aid. The peasantry had to understand, at the cost of starvation death of their families and neighbors, that one had to work on the collective farm (*kolkhoz*) with full commitment.

On January 1, 1933, the Secretary General sent a telegram to the Ukrainian authorities, demanding that they instruct the peasants to return to the state the “previously stolen and hidden grain”. He promised not to repress those who would voluntarily return grain. “All the others” were to be punished under the decree of August 1932 (popularly known as “the Five-Spikelets (ears of grain)” law). Stalin knew that the crops had been collected by grain procurement employees or lost because of neglect by uninterested peasants. The meaning of the telegram consisted in identifying “all the others”, or simply, the cover to search every peasant's house, which provided an opportunity to take all the food they had. At the same time, a large-scale nationwide propaganda campaign was launched to place blame on the peasants for the “food difficulties” in cities. Newspapers informed citizens about “underground wheat towns” controlled by the peasants and concealed from state records. Before movies, documentaries were presented about the “dark cellars” in *kolkhozes* and “pits” in peasant farmsteads detected by Chekists.

Between December 20, 1932 and January 25, 1933, the Chekists, activists of poor peasants' committees, and town activists managed to find about a million poods (40 million lbs) of grain through widespread requisitions carried out in all farms in the rural areas of all Ukraine. Compare this figure with the plan for compulsory grain procurements authorized for Ukraine with regard to the crops of 1932 – 356 million poods from the peasant sector and also with the previously collected grain from this crop by grain procurement employees – 223 million poods.⁴ This proves that it was not grain requisitions that caused the Great Famine in the mid-1933.

The food stored by the peasants was requisitioned by squads controlled by Chekists that were made up of workers and clerks sent from towns and of the local members of poor peasants' committees. During the previous three years, grain procurement was conducted in an ostentatiously democratic way: at general meetings, the poorer peasants assigned the planned quota for a village between farms. For that reason, their relations with the most important section of the village – with those who produced agricultural produce – became tense. One should also take account of the circumstance that occurred after the grain was collected, the poorer peasants starved more severely than the others because they did not have well organized farmyard production. They did not need to be persuaded to take food for their own needs from their neighbors. After several weeks of this activity, all the countryside, except for the frontier areas in Polissia, was deprived of food.

Information blockade on the nationwide famine caused by grain confiscations also apparently extended to the issue of famine triggered by the confiscation of all food in the oblasts where extraordinary commissions operated. The blockade was not reflected in documents, but it lasted until December 1987, and that is why it requires no written evidence. The physical blockade, which covered Ukraine and Kuban, was organized in accordance with Stalin's telegram of January 22 and on February 16, 1933, it was extended to apply to Lower Povolzhie (Lower Volga Region). Documents on the subject have been published.

Can one, therefore, expect to find documents as proof of the confiscation of all the food? In November 1932, the Starominsky VKP(b) District Committee in the North Caucasian Krai (region) approved the following punishment on the Novoselsk stanitsas (Cossack settlement) inhabitants: "Apply the severest measures of influence and coercion while requisitioning all foodstuffs". When Chairman of the Soviet Union's Council of People's Commissars Viacheslav Molotov learned about this, he

⁴ S. Kulchytsky, *Ukrain's'kyi Holodomor v konteksti polityky Kremla pochatku 1930-kh rr.*, Kyiv 2013, p. 134–135.

condemned this action as “un-Bolshevik” in his letter to Mendel Khataevich, Secretary of the KP(b)U Central Committee”.⁵

As such, one cannot expect that documents will surface that confirm this element of the Kremlin's actions. Nevertheless, thousands of witnesses to the Great Famine who survived it confirm the fact that Ukraine's and Kuban's rural areas were entirely deprived of food. In October 2016, the Klio Press published a book edited by Tatiana Boriak, who selected and collated excerpts from the texts of published memoirs of different persons that confirmed the confiscation of all foodstuffs.⁶ This book proves that the state created conditions that made it impossible for the peasantry to survive. An indirect proof of genocide is the death from starvation of millions of Ukrainian peasants.

After the passage of the Ukrainian Act “On the Great Famine of 1932–1933 in Ukraine”, the Federation Council of the Russian Federation held the “round table” called “On the prevention of attempts to falsify history that damage Russia's interests”. The Federal Archive Agency (Rosarkhiv), which previously had not been interested in this subject, suggested that it would prepare a fundamental collection of documents on the famine. And a three-volume (four-book) edition has already been published as part of the series initiated by the Russian Academy of Sciences Professor Alexandr Iakovlev: *Rossiiia. XX vek. Dokumenty* (Russia. 20th Century. Documents), highly regarded among the world's scholars. When preparing the collection for publication, Viktor Kondrashin, responsible for the whole work, instructed his subordinates: “it is necessary to select documents so that the tragedy of the whole Soviet peasantry is shown without emphasis on Ukraine.” The counterpropaganda objective of this publication was also stressed: it was to prevent the international recognition of the “Ukrainian Great Famine as genocide”.⁷

To anticipate the publication of this three-volume study, Rosarkhiv published in 2009 a collection of documents *Golod v SSSR 1930–1934. Famine in the USSR. 1930–1934*. The documents were presented as colored facsimiles so that the readers had an impression of being present in an appropriate archive. In the preface, the Rosarkhiv Head V. Kozlov wrote: “We suggest that before the honorable international or national state structures want to voice opinions on the ‘Holodomor-genocide’ in Ukraine, expressing political assessments, they should take their time.” And indeed, what could the readers think of the presented reproductions of original documents signed by Stalin concerning the provision of aid in the form of food, fodder

⁵ V. Kondrashin, *Golod 1932–1933 godov: tragediia rossiiskoi derevni*, Moscow 2008, p. 216.

⁶ 1933: “*I choho vy shche zhyvi?*”, ed. T. Boriak, Kyiv 2016.

⁷ <www.istpravda.com.ua/artefacts/2012/11/26/101572_0>.

and seeds to Ukraine, North Caucasus and the Lower Volga Region affected by “food difficulties (shortages)” in the first half of 1933? The substantial expenses for publishing the 518-page book with colored facsimile copies were not wasted.

To finish the argument with those who on behalf of Ukraine called on the UN members to recognize the Great Famine as genocide, Kozlov wrote in the preface:

Not a single document was found confirming the conception of the “Holodomor-genocide” in Ukraine or even a trace of documents indicating the ethnic motives for what happened, including in Ukraine [...]. It is no use simplifying the history of the famine in the Soviet Union by reducing it only, even if this applied to a single region, to the extermination of any nation.⁸

The comparison of our tragedy to the Holocaust, so widespread in the Ukrainian diaspora and uncritically borrowed in the post-Soviet Ukraine, played a trick on those who wanted in this way to achieve international recognition of the Great Famine as genocide.

However, scholars studying the Great Famine presented many facts long ago that evidenced the readiness – widespread in Ukraine and among the Ukrainians in Kuban (who wanted to become united with the union republic (i.e. Ukraine) to gain the status of representatives of the “titular nation”) – to fight against the imperial center for real constitutional statehood. To anticipate this variant development, the Stalinist empire used cruel weapons against them: hunger. The “devastating blow” dealt deliberately to the peasantry was accompanied by the blow to the intelligentsia – national communists and “Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists.”

The Soviet-Union-wide famine in 1932–1933, as well as regional famine was triggered by the actions of the authorities. These actions, however, had different objectives: in the former case – to collect as much grain as possible, in the latter – to cause death from starvation of a substantial number of peasants. The former kind of starvation also resulted in many deaths, but in the other case hunger turned into absolute famine-induced extermination. If the nationwide famine, including hunger in Ukraine in the first half of 1932, was the result of indiscriminate “prodrazviorstka”, the “holodomors” were caused by the conscious actions of the authorities, who, on the pretext of exacting mandatory food quotas and making use of decisions adopted on Stalin’s initiative to mete out punishments in kind: taking away of meat (pork fat) and

⁸ Golod w SSSR 1930–1934. *Famine in the USSR. 1930–1934*, eds. O. Antipova et al., Moscow 2009, p. 7.

potatoes for the failure to deliver grain, organized the confiscation of all food reserves with the obvious purpose of condemning millions of peasants to death by starvation. The main blow in the Kremlin's repressive policy was dealt to the regions with a predominant Ukrainian population: Ukraine and Kuban. The losses in other regions of the Soviet Union's European part, and even the Lower Volga Region, where the extraordinary commission was also active, cannot be even compared with the losses in the Ukrainian territories. The Kazakh *Holodomor*, on the other hand, is a separate subject.

These conclusions entirely coincide with the demographic statistics known already in Soviet times. Without providing the figures for absolute famine-induced population losses in 1933, as there was no data to calculate them at that time, Elena Osokina compiled a list of the starving regions in the European part of the Soviet Union by the criterion of predominance of deaths over births in the following order (in thousands): Ukraine – 1459; the North Caucasian Krai – 191; Lower Volga Region – 163; the Central-Chernozem Oblast – 62; the Ural Oblast – 35; the central Volga Region – 15.⁹ The famine-induced deaths of the predominantly Ukrainian-speaking Kuban approximated the Ukrainian indices, but in ten other districts of North Caucasus they were far smaller or none at all.

The Number of Victims

As we approach the 85th anniversary of the genocide, the question remains which version of the Great Famine will be remembered? Regrettably, Rafał Lemkin's thesis about the fundamental difference between the genocide of Ukrainians in the Soviet Union and the genocide of Jews in Nazi Germany has not been internalized to date by those who will be entitled to appear before the international community. As previously noted, they will insist that the Soviet authorities hunted Ukrainians precisely because they were Ukrainians. They have not been convinced even by the return of the leadership of today's Russia to the prerevolutionary ideas of the Ukrainian nation. Like the rulers of the absolutist empire, Vladimir Putin's ideological supporters refuse to acknowledge its existence now when they claim "We are one nation" for they need both Ukraine's territory and its population, and the millennial history of the Ukrainian nation. It is difficult to imagine that the German National Socialists ever desired to embrace Jews.

The equation of the Great Famine with the Holocaust always influenced the experts' estimates of the victims of the Ukrainian tragedy. The diaspora representa-

⁹ E. Osokina, *Zhertvy goloda 1933 goda: skolko ikh?*, "Istoriia SSSR" 1991, no. 5, p. 20.

tives had one criterion: to provide figures approximating or even exceeding the estimated number of the Holocaust victims. Initially, their statements put this figure at 3 to 4 million victims of the Great Famine, later the figure of 7 million became popular, but there were also higher estimates of 10 or even 14 million. Demographer Volodymyr Kubijovyc, highly regarded in the diaspora circles, did not dare to provide his own figures because the Soviet statistics were highly classified, but he commented on the experts' estimates as follows:

If these figures were accepted, it would be necessary to consistently assume that there was a very large influx of population from other republics to Ukraine, particularly to the countryside, to compensate for the huge losses. There is no data to suggest such a mass influx of the non-Ukrainian population to Ukraine's rural areas.¹⁰

When the Soviet demographic statistics were made public, it became possible to give a more or less exact number of the Great Famine victims. There are after all census records from before and after the tragedy and it is possible to assess their reliability based on numerous data and introduce appropriate corrections. The figures given by many authors who based their calculations on the analysis of demographic processes (Steven Weatcroft, Sergei Maksudov, Serhii Pyrozhkov, Omelian Rudnytsky and others), differ, but insignificantly, unlike the earlier estimates by experts (until 1990), which were produced out of thin air. During his several years of work, the American demographer Oleh Wolowyna together with the researchers from the Institute of Demography and Social Studies – Nataliia Levchuk, Omelian Rudnytsky and others established all the major figures relating to the victims. In the final assessment, they calculated that the number of direct famine victims in 1932–1934 was 3,941,000 people, and indirect losses (birth deficits) – 1,122,000, a total of 5,063,000 people. The results coincided with the calculations of other demographers. However, President Viktor Yushchenko insisted on the “true figure” of 10 million people.¹¹ That is why the Wolowyna and Rudnytsky team, in their statement submitted to the Court of Appeal in Kyiv, where the case of the Great Famine was examined, introduced the concept of accumulated losses (taking account of losses caused by the inability to reproduce population by the deceased and the unborn), which amounted to 5 million people in round figures. A ten-times higher figure might as well be

¹⁰ V. Kubijovyc, *Zminy v stani naselennia soviets'koï Ukraïny v rr. 1927–1958*, München 1959, vol. 16, p. 13.

¹¹ N. Levchuk, T. Boriak, O. Wolowyna, O. Rudnytsky, A. Kovbasiuk op.cit., p. 84–112.

accepted as accumulated losses: everything depends on the number of generations adopted in such calculations. Carrying out the President of Ukraine's order, demographers embraced the principle "hold your nose and swallow", but they were not sincere. Senior investigating officer of Ukraine's Security Service A. Dudchenko, who brought the criminal case no. 475 to court, left only the number of direct and indirect losses. It was this number that appeared in the court ruling.¹²

Incidentally, in the decision by A. Dudchenko and Deputy General Public Prosecutor M. Holomsha to send the criminal case no. 475 to court, an absolutely right form of charge was used:

Intentionally depriving the inhabitants of Ukraine's rural areas of all foodstuffs and access to food, which resulted in mass killing through starvation of representatives of the Ukrainian ethnic group as such because the absolute majority of rural population were Ukrainians, and the absolute majority of Ukrainians were peasants.¹³

Though demographers have attempted to close the question of the number of victims of the genocide. Their estimates ring hollow because of the existence of repressions, which were of general and mass character. Unlike the victims of the Great Terror of 1937–1938, a court case was not filed for every person starved to death. However, in Ukraine the influential supporters of V. Yushchenko's line did not abandon their stance: they compare the Great Famine to ethnic cleansing and wish to defend the inflated estimates of the number of its victims. Before opening the memorial to the Great Famine victims on November 7, 2015 in Washington, D.C. an embarrassing situation took place when those people tried to include on it, contrary to the calculations of demographers, the figure of 7 million victims. The opposition by scholars from the USA and Canada, specialists in the problem of the Great Famine, prevented this action. The memorial retains the inscription that speaks of "millions of innocent victims of artificial famine in Ukraine".

This event did not teach anyone anything, however. In one of the publications edited under the aegis of the Maksym Rylsky Institute of Art Studies, Folklore and Ethnology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Professor of Kyiv's Taras Shevchenko University Volodymyr Serhiichuk persistently defends the experts' estimate, according to which the number of victims is 7 million; this estimate had been

¹² *Henotsyd v Ukraïni 1932–1933 rr. Za materialamy kryminalnoi spravy No 475*, eds. M. Herasymenko, V. Udovychenko, Kyiv 2014, p. 390, 444.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 392.

made before demographic statistics were made available. Similarly, V. Serhiichuk's associate, Professor Valentyna Borysenko, says in the note to her article: "Anti-Ukrainian sentiments were again revived in connection with the question of explaining the course, causes and results of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine". Within the text the following remark can be found: "More than strange (or precisely – amoral) are sometimes the attempts by revisionists from among young demographers and historians to understate the extent of losses caused by the Great Famine".¹⁴

Why are we continually persuaded to start again discussions on the number of the Great Famine victims? It is time to do something else: to prepare measures that Ukraine should take in the international arena, proposing that the Holodomor of 1933 be acknowledged as genocide. It is to this task that the capabilities of state authorities and the abilities of scholars should be subordinated.

¹⁴ *Zbirnyk statei na vshanuvannia 70-richchia vydatnoho ukrainista Slovachchyny Myroslava Sopolyhy*, eds. H. Bondarenko, V. Borysenko, L. Vakhnina et al., Kyiv 2016, p. 107, 113, 115.